

## **UNSHELTERED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES ASSISTED AT HARBORSIDE PARK CONNECT EVENT**

*September Public Meeting Scheduled for Community Input on Long-Term Plan*

More than 30 unsheltered individuals engaged with the City of Chula Vista Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) and non-profit and public agency partners on Wednesday, August 31, as the specialists promoted options to help meet the needs of each individual – from housing and social services, to detox assistance and other support.

The “Connect Event” at Harborside Park was the latest attempt to engage unsheltered individuals who are ready to accept such services, as the park will be temporarily closed following a Chula Vista City Council approved resolution to address public health and safety in the park. Thirty individuals received services and/or housing at Harborside Park today including:

- Six individuals accepted transportation to a detox center, however 2 declined services en-route
- One individual accepted a hotel voucher while awaiting transfer to a housing provider
- 11 individuals accepted placement at the East County Transitional Living Center – includes a family of four and a family of six
- HHSA nurse provided Narcan to 13 individuals
- Family Health Centers provided medical services and vaccinations
- One person received hospital transport for medical emergency

“Thank you to City staff and our partner agencies for their work at Harborside Park today,” said Chula Vista Mayor Mary Casillas Salas. “I am grateful that 16 people accepted housing and/or detox placement for this evening and I hope this sets them up for a successful transition to permanent housing. We now will start our work with the community to receive input on options for long-term solutions at Harborside Park.”

The 90-day temporary park closure began on August 31. During this time the City of Chula Vista will increase community outreach for long-term site plans. The first community meeting will be held September 21 (details to be released later).

The City Council resolution temporarily closed Harborside Park to address growing concerns regarding public health risks and escalating illicit behavior and criminal activity at this location. In the past year, prior to today’s Connect Event, the City’s Homeless Outreach Team has conducted weekly outreach at the park. During this engagement the team made 1,680 touch points in one year, with 22 individuals accepting services through the City of Chula Vista HOT or McAlister detox and sober living assistance. By continually offering services and housing, the team contacted an average of 30 people each time they conducted outreach at this specific park.

As one non-profit partner, James E. Merino, Director of Family Services at East County Transitional Living Center, noted, “I am confident that together we will continue to provide the foundation needed for these families and individuals to fulfill their goals and live healthy, enriched lives.” Merino continued, “Over the past ten years, I have seen how the city, nonprofits, faith-based community and private industry can work together to help those that are suffering from some of life's greatest challenges. When we started outreaching with the City of Chula Vista it seemed so foreign to go into the streets and meet individuals and families right where they are. Now you see community and city collaboration. Our efforts have greater reach when we work together as one team.”

Material identified as belonging to unsheltered community members was not discarded and will be placed in storage for them. City workers provided seven days of notice to gather materials before the park was closed on August 31.

The following agencies and organizations participated in providing outreach services directly at the event and/or were prepared to accept individuals for services at the Connect Event:

- City of Chula Vista Homeless Outreach Team
- Alpha Project
- City of Chula Vista Animal Care Facility
- East County Transitional Living Center
- Family Health Centers
- McAlister Institute
- Salvation Army
- San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency
- SBCS San Diego

Updated information, engagement opportunities and planned meetings can be found at [www.chulavistaca.gov/parkupdates](http://www.chulavistaca.gov/parkupdates). This dedicated webpage provides a centralized location for updates and opportunities for community input and engagement to develop a long-term plan and solutions.